



The Stilt

Volume 38, Issue 3
March 2009

Newsletter of the Bridgerland Audubon Society

CBC Analysis Report

Many of us have participated in a Christmas Bird Count. In fact, some of us have spent years scheduling our holiday travel around them! I've often imagined some Audubon scientists scrutinizing the data somewhere, but I've never really thought too much about it between January and November... until now.

You've probably heard the news that National Audubon recently released a report that analyzes 40 years of CBC data and draws connections between climate change and the long-term movement of bird populations across our continent. The report found that while average winter temperatures rose by an average of more than 5°F over the last 40 years, birds species by-and-large have moved farther north during winter. Of all 305 species studied, the average movement north was 35 miles, while about 20% of birds moved more than 100 miles farther north!

The most dramatic effect was on land birds, with impacts on Utah species like the Rough-legged Hawk (178 miles northward), the Clark's Nutcracker (124 miles northward), and the Hairy Woodpecker (135 miles northward). With continued global warming,

there will come a time when some of our more common north-Utah birds become rare. On the flip-side, in southern Utah, there are birds that were unusual 40 years ago that are now becoming increasingly common. Great Egret (110 miles north), Ring-necked Duck (219 miles north), and the Greater Yellowlegs (124 miles north) are some of the birds that have moved farther into Utah from southerly states.

The implications of these data are clear: the climate is changing and the changes are already observable in birds — they are once again the canaries in the coal mine. If we care about preserving nature as we know it and passing it down for future generations to enjoy it as we have, we need to make a serious attempt at changing our ways. In particular, we need to look at how we and our neighbors use energy, our main contributor of global warming pollution. We also need to find ways to use and waste less energy, perhaps by switching over to alternative sources of energy that produce less pollution and damage our planet less.

To learn more information about the CBC report and to learn how you can do something to help, please go to birdsandclimate.org.

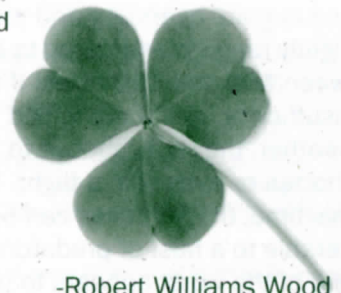
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The Clover and the Plover



The Plover and the Clover can be told
apart with ease,
By paying close attention to the
habits of the Bees,
For ento-molo-gists aver, the Bee
can be in clover,
While ety-molo-gists concur, there
is no B in Plover.



-Robert Williams Wood

Local Bird Spotlight

Swainson's Thrush Spring Arrival by Jason Pietrzak

As winter grinds on, it becomes more and more challenging for me to get bundled up and go out for a day of birding. The relentless cold and gray; boredom from the lacing and unlacing of countless boots; and of course the valley's unique air quality all contribute to this phenomenon. As the first signs of spring begin to appear, however, a new challenge: the *rewarding* challenge of finding and identifying the birds that don't come to our feeders and stay hidden in the hard-to-reach places.

Early March in Cache Valley seems a million miles from summertime, but between southern Mexico and Ecuador, Swainson's Thrushes are beginning to fatten up in preparation for their spring flight back to forests from California to Maine, Alaska to Utah. At this stage, the Thrushes prefer to feast on insects that they find climbing woodland plants or crawling along on the forest floor; they'll even take insects on the wing, something that is unusual among Thrushes.

The males begin the migration first, probably to get to their territory first, but the trip north is long and slow compared to many other birds. The Swainson's feed during the day and migrate overnight and their nightly range is estimated to be between 100 and 150 miles. If food is insufficient, or if there is bad weather, they may choose to shorten or even skip a flight. During this time, the Thrushes can be vulnerable to a host of predators, but one of the worst appears to be man-

made. Swainson's Thrushes, for reasons that aren't completely clear, die in unusually high numbers from collisions with human structures like buildings (windows) and radio towers.

After two months of migration at this pace, the earliest Swainson's Thrushes arrive in Utah in early May. The females begin arriving in Utah in late May or early June. In the meantime, the males have been singing at each other and chasing each other to claim their



territory. This doesn't change when the females arrive, as the males will often try to drive the females away at first, as if they were intruders. The females will persist and the males will eventually accept them and begin the process of nesting in the forests around Cache Valley.

So now imagine it is the end of spring or sometime in the summer and you'd like to take on the challenge of finding a Swainson's Thrush. All of the spotted Thrushes

share several characteristics: they are slightly smaller than Robins, they have brownish-gray heads and backs, white to off-white bellies, variably spotted breasts, and some sort of eye-ring. There are three Thrushes in our region. The Hermit Thrush, Veery and Swainson's Thrush all fit into the basic description above. Features that identify the Swainson's Thrush as distinctive from the other two are a bold buff-colored eye-ring and lores that give the appearance of "spectacles."

You may not have a good chance to get a clear view of the Thrush you've found in the forest. Thrushes are known for being fairly secretive and living in dense, dark forests. The challenge of identifying these birds may leave you dependent on your listening skills. The songs of these two birds can be an easier way to differentiate between them - if you can learn them first. My words won't do the songs justice and you'll really have to go out into the field to experience them, but to describe the songs as simply as possible, the Hermit Thrush song consists of a steady, clear whistle followed by a warbling flourish. Conversely, the song of the Swainson's is a tumbling, spiral of ascending notes.

Once you learn their songs, you will start hearing countless Thrushes on your walks in wooded areas around the valley. Your heightened awareness might even lead you to see one of these challenging birds. Just make sure you get out sooner rather than later as these birds will finish their breeding cycle and begin their slow migration south in late July!

Audubon Calendar

March 2009

5 Board of Trustees Meeting BAS Trustees meet at 7 p.m. at the Cache Valley Learning Center, 75 S. 400 West, Logan. Enter through the building's west doors. All are welcome to attend.

7 Sings of Spring II This is a continuation of our February 14th trip to look for early spring birds in the Benson-Amalga area. We will also be heading up the mouth of Birch Canyon east of Smithfield. We will be searching for early spring flowers and the very rare Say's Phoebe. Meet at 8 a.m. at the parking lot between Caffe Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 East 150 North). Dress warmly and bring something to warm to drink and something to snack on. The trip will most likely be finished by 2 p.m.

12 General Meeting Join us at our same great location, the Cache Valley Learning Center (75 S. 400 West), when Cindy Johnson, a wetland ecologist and environmental consultant, will be presenting on Cache Valley wetlands. She'll explain what qualifies as a wetland, how to identify a wetland, what types of development are permitted in wetlands, and what to do to find out if activity in a wetland is legal or not. The meeting will start at 7 p.m. Enter through the building's west doors. All are welcome to attend and refreshments will be provided by Crumb Brothers and Caffe Ibis. We hope to see you there.

21 Birds of Hyrum Dam, Wellsville Pond, and the Old Mendon Road. We may find newly arriving birds such as Osprey, loons, Red-breasted Merganser, and other ducks as we look at some valley hotspots. We may also find songbirds such as Tree Swallows, Mountain Bluebirds, and herons at the rookery. Meet at 8 a.m. at the parking lot between Caffe Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 East 150 North). Dress warmly and bring something to warm to drink and something to snack on. The trip will most likely be finished by 2 p.m.

Golden Eagle Audubon Society Annual Banquet and Auction

Saturday, March 14, 2009
Owyhee Plaza Hotel, Boise, ID
\$35 Per Person

Social Hour - 6 pm
Dinner Served - 7 pm

"Wings of the Imagination: Why We Need Birds" Why is it that some birds of day-light sing their most glorious songs at night? How can a bird build an intricate, detailed nest, and then use it for only one season? Why can we find birds thriving both in verdant jungles and in the most desolate landscapes? What can we learn from the ability of birds to adapt to changes in their surroundings?



Drawing on a lifetime of experiences from Africa to the Antarctic to American back yards, Kenn Kaufman explores the mysteries of bird life and the ways that they can add to our understanding of our place in the world.

In this richly illustrated talk, he suggests that our encounters with birds not only increase our sense of wonder but also can increase our ability to communicate with our fellow humans.

For more information, visit the Golden Eagle Audubon Society's website at www.goldeneagleaudubon.org

Recent Immigrants to Utah, the Moose

If you've spent much time in the forests and wetlands of northern Utah, you may have been lucky enough to have seen one of North America's most magnificent animals, the Moose.

The Moose is the largest member of the deer family, and one of the largest mammals to have survived the last Ice Age. Utah's subspecies of Moose is known as the Shiras, or Wyoming Moose. Although the smallest subspecies of Moose in North America, it can grow to be nearly six feet tall and weigh as much as 1,000 pounds. Bull Moose can grow a rack of antlers that reaches four feet across.

One might assume such an ancient and enormous animal has long existed in Utah, but the Moose is one of Utah's newer immigrants. The first Moose in Utah were seen about 100 years ago, and the total population may have been less than 100 animals as late as the 1950s. Today, there are about 4,500 Moose throughout northern Utah. So how did the Moose become so plentiful in such a short time?

The Moose's immigration to Utah looks like a case of perfect timing. Many of the Moose's predators like Grizzly Bears, Wolves and Mountain Lions had been largely exterminated. At the same time, logging was replacing mature forests with new meadows and scrub that

Moose prefer. The combination of young growth and wetlands provided the ideal habitat for Moose to thrive.

On top of these favorable conditions, human management has helped the Moose expand. Overwhelming demand for Moose hunting has fostered strategies to encourage population growth. More recently, there have been attempts to speed up the expansion of Moose by transplanting them to new mountain ranges.

It's to say that the 1900s were the century of the Utah Moose.

Despite success in the last hundred years, Moose face challenges in the next hundred. Maturing woodlands

will be able to support fewer Moose. Old predators are rebounding and will take their toll. But the most difficult challenge the Moose may face is climate change. The Moose evolved to survive in extreme cold climates. If temperatures continue to rise, the Moose will retreat higher into the mountains and further north until one day this recent visitor returns to Wyoming.

The next time you visit the mountains, pay close attention to the water and you too may be lucky enough to see the Moose.

by Jason Pietrzak



The above artwork of the bull moose is an original piece done by an artist named Mark Matson. Mark has generously given Bridgerland Audubon permission to publish this piece, entitled Decision Time, in this issue of the Stilt. To see more of the artist's work or to contact Mark, please visit his website at www.markmatsonart.com. Thank you Mark.

Bird's Eye reView

An article a friend sent me online was worthy of mention this month. The article is entitled "OSU Researcher Uses Warblers' Birdsong to Aid Species" and can be found at this internet address: http://www.oregonlive.com/environment/index.ssf/2008/07/osu_researchers_uses_warblers.html. It was originally published in the Oregonian on 24 July, 2008. The purpose of the article was to spotlight one researcher's attempt to lure the Black-throated Blue Warbler to nest in a particularly unattractive (for warbler standards) habitat by simply playing the late season Black-throated Blue Warbler song the previous Autumn. To his surprise, the next Spring brought many warblers either attempting to or successfully nesting in this unappealing locale.

Welcome to BAS

New Members

Wallace O. Bloss
Shirley Braatz
Barbara Campbell
Cathy Clayton
Ira Don
Andrea Eggett
Gabriela Ibarra

Logan Library
Melisa Mileham
Caroline Shugart
Utah State University Library
The Wellings

Dale Azevedo
Linda F. Baker
Leanna Ballard
Leroy B. Beasley
E Schupp & J Boettinger
Ian Campbell
Allyson A. Davis
Mr. Keith L. Dixon
Kurt A. Fornoff

Renewing Members

Alene S. Fornoff
Mr. Al Forsyth
John Gallagher
Mr. & Mrs. T. J. Gordon
Marilyn Hammond
Mr. Lyle Henderson
Rebecca Huffman
Nathan & Chris Hult
Richard G. Lamb
Nancy Mesner

Ryan O Donnell
Stephen Peterson
Mimi Recker
Joan K. Shaw
J Kingsland & A Shifrer
Gardiner S. Stiles
Miiko Toelken
F. H. Wagner

Bridgerland Audubon contacts

Trustees

- 2006-2009 Ron Goede, 752-9650; Frank Howe, 787-1859
- 2007-2010 Chris Cokinos, 245-7769; Jack Greene, 563-6816; Reinhard Jockel
- 2008-2011 Jim Cane, 713-4668; William Masslich, 753-1759; Richard Mueller, 752-5637; Brandon Spencer, 753-2790

Bridgerland Audubon Contacts

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- Vice Pres. Jason Pietrzak, 938-0203, pietrzak@gmail.com
- Secretary Lyle Bingham, 563-6003, lwbingham@comcast.net
- Treasurer Jennifer Hoffmann, 713-4935, jennifer.hoffmann@comcast.net
- Outings Lyle Bingham, 563-6003, lwbingham@comcast.net
- Conservation Richard Mueller, 752-5637, rmueller@biology.usu.edu
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- Sanctuary Jim Cane, 713-4668, jimcane@cc.usu.edu
- Hotline Nancy Williams, 752-4780, nanwill@cc.usu.edu
- Webmaster Stephen Peterson, 755-5041, cllslp@msn.com
- Webhost www.xmission.com

Membership in the Bridgerland Audubon Society includes a subscription to *The Stilt*, as well as *Audubon* magazine. The editor of *The Stilt* invites submissions, due on the 15th of each month. Send to birdnerdut@gmail.com.

National Audubon Society Chapter Membership Application

Yes, I'd like to contribute to Audubon and receive the Bridgerland Audubon newsletter, *The Stilt*, and the *National AUDUBON* magazine, as a:

_____ **New** member of the National Audubon Society and Bridgerland Audubon.

My check for \$20 is enclosed (this is a special first-year rate).

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____



Please make all checks payable to National Audubon Society and send with this card to:
National Audubon Society
Membership Data Center
PO Box 51001
Boulder, CO 80322-1001
W-52 Local Chapter Code: 7XCHA

National Audubon occasionally makes its membership list available to selected organizations. To have your name omitted from this, please check this box.

Note to new National Audubon members: To get on *The Stilt* newsletter mailing list without the usual 8-week delay, contact Susan Durham, 752-5637, sdurham@cc.usu.edu.

Prefer the local newsletter only? Send \$20 (make checks payable to Bridgerland Audubon Society) and this form to: Bridgerland Audubon Society, PO Box 3501, Logan, UT 84323-3501 for a subscription to *The Stilt*.



The *Stilt*

Newsletter of the Bridgerland Audubon Society

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1*3*****SCH 3-DIGIT 843

**LYLE BINGHAM
764 ROBIN ST
SMITHFIELD UT 84335-1028**



Where does your lifelist stand? Which is to say – how many species of birds have you identified in North America, north of Mexico? (This is known as the ABA area)

- Less than 100
- More than 100
- More than 150
- More than 200
- More than 250
- More than 300
- More than 350
- More than 400
- More than 450
- More than 500
- More than 550
- More than 600
- More than 650
- More than 700

To cast your vote, please send an email to birdnerdut@gmail.com with "Lifelist" as the title of the email. Results will be published in the April issue of the Stilt.